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AUTHOR Baker, William
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ABSTRACT

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Monitoring First Graders' Motivation Through the Revising and Editing Phase of Writing Projects

By

William Baker

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts

Kean University

May 1999

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Abstract

The data gathered for this study supported the hypothesis that first grade students can revise and edit original writing projects without experiencing any significant loss in motivation. This hypothesis was confirmed after the students had finished writing and revising three original stories while utilizing three separate revision strategies. The three strategies implemented were: 1) making revisions based on small group writing conferences; 2) revising with a parent at home; and 3) revising with the teacher on a computer. Student motivation for each project was monitored through individual surveys that were conducted after the students had completed each step of writing process.

Dedication:

I would like to dedicate this project and the many hours of work it entailed to my wife Mary and our two beautiful children Anna and Luke.

Table of Contents

	Page
I. Abstract	ii
II. Dedication	iii
III. List of Tables	v
IV. Monitoring First Graders' Motivation Through the Revising and Editing Phase of Writing Projects	
Introduction	1
Hypothesis	3
Procedure	4
Results: Analysis of Data	8
Conclusion	9
Implications for Writing	9
V. Writing Process: Related Literature	14
VI. References	32
VII. Appendices	37
Appendix A: Parental Revision Letter	38
Appendix B: Writing Process Survey Form	39

List of Tables

Table	Page
I. Revising and Editing Based on Small Group Conferences	8
II. Revising and Editing at Home with a Parent	8
III. Revising and Editing on the Computer with Teacher Assistance	8

When children enter first grade, they do so with an internal motivation to write. Donald Graves puts it this way, "Children want to write. They want to write the first day of school. This is no accident. Before they went to school they marked up walls, pavements, newspapers with crayons, chalk, pens, or pencils...anything that makes a mark. The child's mark says, "I am." (Graves 1983).

In addition to being motivated to write, children comprehend that written words have meaning (Mavrogenes, 1986; McLane and McNamee, 1990). It is the responsibility of teachers to further develop this understanding while at the same time build upon the motivation to write that most children naturally bring to the classroom. In many school districts these goals are accomplished by implementing writing programs that emphasize teaching writing through the writing process.

The writing process as it is defined in this paper includes five separate and distinct steps. The five steps in sequential order are: 1) brainstorming; 2) writing a rough draft; 3) revising; 4) editing and proofreading; and 5) publication. In classrooms that promote process writing, it is understood that not everything that the students write can or should be taken through the entire writing process.

Research has indicated that teaching writing through a process

approach has not only yielded positive results in terms of actual writing performance, but student motivation has been increased as well (Krendl and Dodd 1987; Freeman and Snaders 1987; Goldstein and Carr 1996). Teacher's classroom observations often support these research findings.

Despite the success that has been experienced using the writing process, it's been observed that student motivation often reaches its peak during the rough draft phase of projects. When it comes time to revise and edit projects, young students are seldom very motivated to continue working through the writing process. Excitement in projects returns again when the completed project can be shared in its published form.

These observations prompt questions such as the following: Can the motivation of first grade students be maintained during the revising and editing stages of the writing process? If so, what methods of implementation would be the most effective? Can word processing capabilities be used to enhance student motivation? Can motivation to revise and edit material be enhanced by working on projects at home with parents in a one on one situation? When young writers are asked to revise and edit, do they feel as if they are compromising their literary voices? When students revise and edit with their teachers, do they feel as if the project at hand is no longer theirs? Do most

young writers feel comfortable revising and editing with peers? Would student motivation be enhanced if children could choose their own method of revising and editing once they have been exposed to the various alternatives? It is the purpose of this research project to acquire more information in relation to these types of questions.

Considerable research has been conducted on the writing process and its individual components. There is also a great deal of research on affective aspects of writing. Unfortunately, no research that specifically focuses on how the process of revising and editing affects the motivation of young writers apparently exists. This lack of research indicates that more studies need to be conducted in relation to how specific aspects of the writing process impact young students' attitudes about writing.

If research can provide definitive answers to the questions proposed and to other similar questions, teachers will undoubtedly have a better insight into their young students' capabilities and motivations. Teachers could then use this information to motivate their young students to become more capable and sophisticated writers.

Hypothesis:

Students can sustain their internal motivation through the revising and editing phase of a writing project.

Procedure

Student motivation before, during, and after the revising and editing stages of the writing process was monitored as the students wrote original stories during what is known as writing workshop. During writing workshop, the students worked on stories based on whatever inspired them. Stories that were written included both fictional and non-fictional works. Fictional stories were written in a variety of genres, while all non-fiction stories were based on students' personal experiences. The only creative requirement imposed was that all stories must go through all five stages of the writing process. The twenty-two first graders who participated in this project regularly participated in writing workshop four times a week.

During writing workshop, parent volunteers regularly came into the classroom to help facilitate the routine proceedings. Prior to entering the classroom, volunteers had received training on how to help children with process writing within a classroom environment. Their additional support and growing expertise helped to provide individual students with the support and guidance that they needed to successfully complete often ambitious writing endeavors.

Prior to participating in this research study, all students had some experience in working original stories through the writing

process. Previously, the students had both individually and collectively worked on written projects that had been taken through the entire writing process.

Students' ideas for stories came from lists of story ideas that had been previously generated and added to over time. Once the students decided upon a definitive story idea, they then brainstormed and expanded upon their ideas by making some form of semantic web. As mentioned previously, original story ideas were based on both fictional and non-fictional events and characters. Their were no significant storytelling limitations imposed.

Once the children had completed their initial brainstorming, they were free to begin working on rough drafts of their stories. As the students worked on their rough drafts, they were encouraged to draw upon and expand upon the ideas that were presented in their original webs.

Upon completion of their rough drafts, it was then time for the students to revise and edit what they had written. In order to test whether or not the students' internal motivation during this phase of the writing process could be sustained, three different strategies for revision were implemented. The three strategies implemented were: 1) writing conferences involving peers and the teacher; 2) revising and editing at home with

parents; and 3) revising on the computer with minimal teacher assistance. The three strategies were implemented separately in conjunction with three different student created stories. The strategies were implemented in the order listed. The students spent approximately one week working each story through the entire writing process. Therefore, all the information gathered for this report was collected over a three to four week period.

When students reached the revision stage of their first story, writing conferences were conducted in a small group setting involving the teacher and three or four students. The students read their rough drafts to their peers and the teacher. Afterwards, comments were made by the listeners concerning commendations and recommendations for improvement and clarification. Upon completion of the conferences, the children were then responsible for making any necessary or desired revisions.

When the children reached the revision stage on their second story, they were asked to take their stories home so that they could revise and edit them with a parent. The children were instructed to take home their idea webs as well as their rough drafts so that their parents could begin to see how the writing process works. A letter (Appendix A) was sent home with the children that clearly stated what the requirements for this

assignment were.

While the children were working on their third and final story to be monitored for this research project, they were given the opportunity to revise and edit their stories on the computer. As the students worked on their revisions, some assistance from the teacher was provided. This assistance was provided so that in addition to having to revise and edit, the students would not be additionally burdened with the logistics of computer operation. The teacher provided the students with technical assistance only. The ideas for revisions came primarily from the students.

As the students wrote all three stories, they were surveyed before and after each phase of the writing process regarding their motivation for the project at hand. Prior to surveying any of the students, the survey form (Appendix B) was clearly explained and all the terminology was defined. The surveys were all conducted orally with the teacher marking student responses. One possible limitation to this study is that the children may have provided the teacher with the information that he/she feels the teacher wants to hear rather than being totally honest. As a counter measure to this limitation, the teacher was very clear with the students regarding the significance of their honest responses.

Results

As noted in Tables 1-3, there were negligible differences between the means of the measures as the *t* analysis indicated no significant difference.

Table 1:

Individual Revising and Editing Based on Small Group Conferences

Sample	Mean	S.D.	t
Prior	3.43	.98	.00
After	3.43	.93	

Table 2:

Revising and Editing at Home with Parental Assistance

Sample	Mean	S.D.	t
Prior	3.33	1.11	.75
After	3.57	.93	

Table 3:

Revising and Editing on the Computer with Teacher Assistance

Sample	Mean	S.D.	t
Prior	3.45	1.10	.31
After	3.55	.86	

Conclusion

The data that was gathered for this study indicates that there were no significant changes in student motivation as students reworked original stories through the revising and editing stages of the writing process. First grade students can sustain their internal motivation through the revising and editing phases of a writing project. The results of this study support that hypothesis.

Implications For Writing

First grade students are very capable of taking full advantage of the many benefits of process writing. The data that was gathered for this report indicates that students can even benefit from the potentially daunting tasks of revising and editing without experiencing any significant motivational letdowns. Therefore, the results of this research are clearly an endorsement for process writing in the first grade.

The students who participated in this study had been exposed to the concepts of revising and editing since the beginning of the year. Since September, the students had been revising and

editing stories, messages, letters, and charts within a group setting. As revising and editing took place, changes were discussed and improvements to the text and it's intended message were routinely noted. As a result of these experiences, many of the children possessed a beginning understanding of how to go about the tasks of revising and editing their original stories prior to the time that this study was conducted. Nonetheless, the procedures enacted for this study took into account the relative inexperience that the children had with regards to revising and editing, as well as the fact that the internal values of such concepts might still be elusive to some of the children. With these ideas in mind, the children were not required to revise and edit their work extensively or to the point of frustration. The activities proposed for this study were designed to serve as an introduction to hands-on revising and editing. The results in terms of motivation, as indicated in Tables 1-3, were positive. In addition, many of the children clearly were capable of understanding the value of revising and editing in relation to their projects. The fact that motivation did not significantly change during revising and editing indicates that while understanding continued to evolve, the children did not become bored or detached from their chosen projects.

In order to keep students engaged in process writing, the

participants of this study revised and edited under three distinctly different conditions. The first strategy implemented involved revising and editing based on small group conferences. This commonly used strategy enabled the students to hear and learn from their peers in a constructive and engaging manner. The students were very excited to share their feelings and ideas about each other's stories. The exchange of ideas that resulted from implementation of this strategy was exciting and rewarding for the students. When the time came for the students to complete actual revisions, they did not lack good ideas from which to pick and choose.

The second revising and editing strategy involved having the students work with a parent at home. Although the results in this study were positive, a great number of potential positive and negative variables exist. The most prominent variable is the existing working relationship between the child and his/her cooperating parent. How capable is the parent at engaging his/her child in a meaningful and fun way? Another important factor might be parent's estimates of their child's competence. If parents can accurately judge their child's independent level of task mastery, they could then fine-tune their assistance, helping their child perform at a slightly more advanced level (Cole and Cole 1993; DeBaryshe, Buell, and Binder 1996). When these

conditions are met, enlisting parental assistance in the revising and editing of students' projects can be both inspiring and educational.

The final condition under which the students revised and edited involved the students working on the computer with teacher assistance. The children enjoyed this process a great deal. The logistical difficulties associated with revising and editing were removed and the children were free to focus their energies on the project at hand. In general, the students greatly enjoyed the experience of working on the computer. In addition, working with the teacher and seeing their writing displayed on the computer made the students feel as if their writing was something special.

The potential revising and editing capabilities of future computer software is unlimited. The easier the applications, the easier it will be to maintain motivation during the revising and editing phases of a writing project. The future relationship between the writing process and computer applications has very exciting possibilities. Hopefully, school districts will become more efficient at bringing modern technology to the classroom in an expedient manner.

First grade teachers should enthusiastically use the writing process with their students. They should be encouraged by the

fact that their students motivation need not be negatively affected by the potentially difficult tasks of revising and editing. Revising and editing can be meaningful and even enjoyable tasks for students, especially if various strategies are implemented in order to enable the students to experience the process from a variety of meaningful perspectives.

Writing Process: Related Literature

Writing Process: Related Literature

The use of the writing process as an instructional method to teach young students how to write began in earnest during the 1980's. This movement was fueled by the research findings and writings of such renowned educational researchers and theorists as Donald Graves, Lucy McCormick Calkins, and Nancie Atwell. Books such as Writing: Teachers and Children at Work (Graves, 1983), The Art of Teaching Writing (Calkins, 1986), and In The Middle: Writing, Reading and Learning With Adolescents (Atwell, 1987) inspired a generation of teachers and administrators to embark on the journey that is process writing.

Prior to classroom implementations of process writing, children were often not given regular opportunities to write freely on topics that were self-selected and of personal interest to them. "This pattern began to change in the 1970's, when a diverse group of researchers including Donald Graves, Marie Clay, James Britton, Dixie Goswami, Shirley Brice Heath, Robert Gunlach, and Glenda Bissex, began to examine writing as it occurred in natural settings" (Newkirk and Atwell 1986). This shift in theory was based on "research that indicates that the only way one learns to write is by writing" (Mayher, Lester,

Pradl 1983).

The results of writing process approaches in classrooms has been well documented since the 1980's. Research conducted has not only monitored the effectiveness of the writing process in terms of developing students' perceptions of their own writing, but also in terms of how process writing affects students' motivation to write. The findings of these research projects indicate that using the writing process can improve both students' perceptions of their abilities as writers as well as increase their motivation to write.

In 1987, Krendl and Dodd conducted a three year longitudinal study designed to determine the effectiveness of their curriculum as it pertained to process writing. Their study which included 90 students from grades three through twelve showed that the students had increased their motivation to write as well as their confidence in their writing abilities. In addition, student surveys indicated that the students found writing to be a less formidable task than before and the students felt that they had in fact become better writers.

Another 1987 research project featuring fifth grade students in Florida concluded that over the period of thirty six weeks, eighty percent of the students surveyed indicated that they had more confidence in their writing and they enjoyed the process

of writing more than they had previously (Hernandez, 1987).

In April 1996, The National Center For Educational Statistics conducted a study involving twenty nine thousand five hundred students from fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades on the benefits of process writing. The results of this study presented evidence that the teaching of "process writing techniques is associated with higher average writing proficiency among students" (Goldstein and Carr, 1996). This suggests that in addition to potentially improving students' perceptions of their own writing skills and increasing students' internal motivation to write, the writing process may also help students to be more proficient writers.

In the past, various aspects of the writing process have been studied extensively, yet research on revision (a step within the writing process) has been notably absent (Sommers, 1980). The process of revision has historically been associated with mainly mature writers (Fitzgerald and Stamm, 1990). It is the purpose of this article to thoughtfully analyze how revising and editing potentially impact the motivation of first grade students as they work compositions through the entire writing process.

How much and what kind of revising can teachers realistically expect first grade students to do? In setting expectations, do teachers take into account the fragile confidence of their

students? Can first grade students revise and edit for meaning in a way that is personally relevant? With these thoughts in mind, teachers must proceed with caution as they guide their young students through this critical phase in the writing process.

In reference to the revising efforts of young writers, Donald Graves states that "almost every child is able to change something. What and how much the child changes depends on the force and depth of the voice, what the child sees in his writing, and his level of development" (1983). Graves further suggests that children make changes in their writing based on what they perceive as important within the writing process. The order in which young students set about revising and editing occurs in the following order:

1) Spelling
2) Motor-aesthetic issues
3) Conventions (Punctuation, capitalization)
4) Topic and information
5) Major revisions

Graves states, "From the outset, children are able to make changes in most of the five areas. A category is dominant when the concept is one the child employs at the conscious independent level" (1983). If a writer's capacity to revise relies

on his current level of development, then how much revising can a typical first grader be expected to accomplish without negatively affecting his motivation? What revision strategies and procedures can be implemented in order to maximize first graders revising abilities without negatively affecting students' motivation to continue working a project through the writing process?

In addition to searching for effective and motivating revising strategies, teachers must be careful to respect a student's ownership of the project at hand. "Rebellion is not the exclusive property of the professional writer. It is a healthy sign when children rebel in order to maintain control of their information or language. The child may be "wrong," but the greater issue in the long run will be the child's sense of control of the writing process. We (teachers) are experts at stealing children's writing voices" (Graves & Murray 1980).

Teachers also need to be aware of the relevance of the project to each individual child. "What should never be forgotten is that the force of revision, the energy for revision, is rooted in the child's voice, the urge to express" (Calkins, 1983).

When left to their own devises, first grade students rarely revise and edit writing projects and the revisions they do make tend to be superficial ones (Graves & Murray, 1980; MacArthur &

Graham, 1987; NAEP & ETS, 1986; Scaramalia & Bereiter, 1986). Fitzgerald suggests this may be the result of the following factors: 1) clear intentions as to where the project is going to in the first place are never established; 2) they may not see areas in need of revision due to the fact that they cannot view their own writing with the necessary objectivity; 3) they may be aware of problem areas but lack the necessary skills to correct them; 4) young students may not be able to coordinate all of the necessary skills involved in revising due to the fact that they are not developed to the point where it is a realistic possibility (1987).

With the preceding ideas in mind, the search for an effective means in which to get first graders to revise and edit without losing motivation begins. The remainder of this article will focus on the following possibilities: 1) working through the revision process with the aid of both the teacher and fellow students in the form of writing conferences; 2) allowing the students to revise one on one with parents in a home environment; and 3) using computers as a potentially motivating writing tool that will enable students to work through the writing process.

The revision strategy that is most commonly used to help students to revise and edit is that of writing conferences. Conferences with the teacher and/or other students is a widely

used and well researched method of revising and editing for young students. Research suggests that writing conferences help beginning writers to reflect upon the project at hand as well as on the writing process in general. Conferences may also help children to clarify their understanding of what constitutes good writing, how to identify problems within text and how to go about fixing them (Calkins, 1986; Freedman & Calfee, 1984; Walker & Elias 1987; Fitzgerald & Stamm 1992). "What should never be forgotten, however, is that the force of revision, the energy of revision, is rooted in the child's voice, the urge to express" (Calkins, 1986). If the voice of the child is acknowledged and respected, conferences can be a motivational experience for children. "Conferences give children the opportunity to hear their voices control their writing" (Graves, 1991).

Walker and Elias (1987) conducted a study in California designed to determine what actually constitutes an effective writing conference. They discovered that effective conferences tended to focus on the student and the student's work rather than on the tutor. Walker and Elias found no correlation between the amount of teacher led discussion and the effectiveness of the overall conference. Unsuccessful conferences predominantly exclude the student from being an

active participant and they tend to focus on the teacher's expertise. These types of conferences tend to lead to the teacher taking over the project and forcing his ideas upon the student, resulting in a project that the student has lost sole ownership of. When this occurs, student motivation decreases and the student's sense of achievement is decreased.

The findings of this study present evidence that suggests that skilled and perceptive teachers are able to use conferences to help students to critically reflect upon not only the project at hand, but on the process of writing itself. In addition, writing conferences with a trained professional allow students an invaluable opportunity to work with and learn from an expert in a supportive and nurturing environment. Conditions that would undoubtedly be ideal for enhancing student motivation.

A study conducted by Fitzgerald and Stamm in North Carolina involving first grade peer writing conferences indicated that there is a direct correlation between student's discussions and the actual revisions that occur in student writing. Seventy percent of the students involved in this study not only edited for surface details but for meaning as well. Interestingly, the most substantial positive effects were demonstrated by the students who began at the lowest developmental level (Fitzgerald and Stamm, 1990). The overall results of this study indicate that

peer conferences can motivate students to make meaningful revisions regardless of their developmental level.

Fitzgerald and Stamm conducted a case study in 1992 to determine the effects of conferences on both a first grade student with limited revising ability and a first grade student who had demonstrated a solid beginning understanding of revision. The writer who began the study with a limited understanding of how to go about revision demonstrated significant growth as a result of the conferences. At the start of the study this student demonstrated only an ability to identify surface revisions that needed to be made and she had little understanding as to how to go about making the necessary changes. Through repeated conferences, this child acquired a greater understanding of how to make not only surface revisions, but to also identify and begin to solve problems of order and coherence as well. In addition to significantly increasing the quantity and level of revisions, the monitored student also reached the point where she began to make revisions in her head.

The child who demonstrated a more developed understanding of the revision process was impacted far less by the conferences. Though there were instances when revision was the direct result of conferences, a similar number of revisions

were made during time frames when the child worked independently. This particular child often chose not to follow the revision suggestions that were made during conferences.

The results of this study may suggest that students who are at lower developmental levels can benefit more from writing conferences or perhaps some students simply find these conferences to be more motivational than others. If students are open to constructive criticism and creative input, they stand to gain more from writing conferences. Other students who may not be as receptive to the ideas of others might find such conferences to be intrusive and therefore not motivational.

Writing conferences can prove to be a motivating influence on most young writers as long as conferences are designed to meet young writers' needs in a way that does not compromise their writers' voices. Graves offers these simple suggestions for conducting successful and motivating conferences: "Children will talk about their subjects. They talk when the conference setting is predictable. They talk when there is a very simple structure to the conference itself. The child knows he is to speak about the topic and the process and that the teacher will help him do this" (1983).

Another method of maintaining or even possibly increasing student motivation during the revision stages of the writing

process, is to allow children to revise and edit projects one on one with their parents. In the history of educational research, a great deal of attention has been paid to collaborative efforts involving both peers and the teacher, but very little attention has been paid to the potential educational benefits of the parent/child relationship (DeBaryshe, Buell & Binder 1996; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991). The relationship that parents share with their children during learning experiences is essential for both effective learning and socialization (DeBaryshe, Buell& Binder 1996; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). Parental support can potentially allow children to perform beyond their current levels of development (Vygotsky, 1978). With these understandings in mind, why not have children revise and edit written compositions with parents in a natural and unthreatening environment?

In 1992, Burns and Casbergue conducted a study on the collaborative writing efforts of parents and their four year old children (1992). The results of the study indicated that when the working relationship was parent controlled, projects tended to focus on spelling and writing conventions. In contrast, collaborative efforts that were more child centered tended to create products that were more creative in nature while not being as conventionally accurate. As a result of their study,

Burns and Casbergue (1992) concluded that when parents and their children can work together within an appropriate child centered scenario, the writing experience can be both motivating and developmentally enhancing.

Additional research into the parent child relationship was conducted by DeBaryshe, Buell & Binder (1996). Their study involved twenty children between the ages of five and six and their parents. Over the course of the study, the children were asked to compose a letter both independently and with assistance from their mothers. The study was conducted in the homes of the individual families.

The results of the study indicated that children produced longer and more conventionally accurate letters with the assistance of their mothers. These letters also tended to be more sophisticated in content. The degree to which an emphasis was placed on the finer points of writing depended on the child's independent writing level. Interestingly, dyads normally only engaged in conversation concerning conventionality and not meaning.

Based on these results, DeBaryshe, Buell and Binder concluded that mothers often make sensitive writing tutors who seem to generally have a good understanding of the progression of developing writing skills. Mothers also provided scaffolding for

their children so that they could reach beyond their current writing abilities in order to express what it was that they wanted to say.

Overall, research involving the student-mentor relationship between parents and students needs to be studied to a much greater extent. Perhaps through a better understanding of this very influential and critical relationship, educators can better inform parents as to how they can help facilitate the education of their children. Parental assistance in the process of revision could help students to better understand the writing process. If conducted effectively, this working relationship could prove to be very motivational for both students and parents.

Aside from actual revision techniques and strategies, it is essential at this juncture in time to begin to determine how computer applications can potentially influence students' motivation to revise and edit for meaning. Recent studies have been conducted on the effects of computer technology on the writing abilities and motivation of young writers as they work through the writing process. Included in these reports is specific information about how computer applications appear to influence student abilities and their motivation to revise.

In 1989, Karen Neufeld conducted a study in which she concluded that when first and second grade students write on

computers, their motivation to write improved. Her students took great pride in seeing their efforts transformed on to the printed page.

Over the ten day period that students worked on stories, they spent approximately half of the time revising old stories and half of the time working on new ones. Altogether, the twenty first and second graders participating in this study completed one hundred-ten stories. Sixty-six of the stories received some form of revision. Interestingly, of the sixty-six stories that received revision, sixty-three of them were revised by adding text on to the need of the story. In only three cases did students insert or change existing text. Neufeld speculates that one reason for this lack of insertions and changes might be due to young childrens' inexperience in working the functions of the computers. In spite of improved computer programming since 1989, a lack of computer experience and understanding still results in students' reluctance to insert and change completed text.

Even with all the logistic difficulties that the students faced when word processing, they still found writing on the computer to be a very desirable activity. "The children were especially excited about printing their stories and displaying or sharing their copies. After receiving their printed stories, they insisted

that each day's work be printed at the end of each session. This was invariably followed by showing the story to a friend, reading it to the teacher, putting it up in their display space on the bulletin board, or requesting to take the story home" (Neufeld, 1989).

As a result of her study, Neufeld speculates that in spite of the motivational benefits of word processing, young students should not be expected to take full advantage of the editing capabilities that are available. The functions involved in completing insertions and making internal changes are too complicated for young children to undertake efficiently and without frustration. Most children can only be expected to make spontaneous corrections by using the delete key and by adding text to the end of a story.

A similar study conducted in 1989 by Olson and Johnston concluded that students' attitudes toward writing on the computer were positive. The children genuinely liked to work on the computer because they thought that "it was fun" (1989). This study also gathered information that indicated that students went back to reread stories more often when using the computer and some children were more likely to edit on the computer as well.

Maria Yua (1991) performed a study over the course of six

months in which elementary students' writing behaviors on computers were observed as they worked through the various stages of the writing process. This study concluded that in order for students' writing abilities to be maximized, several conditions needed to be in place. In addition to the teacher being actively involved as both instructor and facilitator, the teacher also needs to receive administrative support and proper training. It was also concluded that word processing should be thought of as an additional writing tool and never as a potential replacement for more traditional forms of writing. Her final conclusion was that teachers and students need to have access to a sufficient number of computers and printers in order to make them a consistently valuable tool for students.

In a study conducted by Diane McBee (1994), she compared the writing progress of two groups of kindergartners. One group wrote only in journals while the other group wrote exclusively on computers. The results of her study suggested that in spite of the childrens' motivation to use computers, the children who worked on the computers did not show any more improvement in their writing skills than the control group.

The research gathered for this article in relation to the use of computers in elementary classrooms clearly suggests that computers should be used regularly in the classroom as a writing

tool. Young children find writing on the computer to be a motivating and rewarding experience, therefore it should be used as a tool to further promote process writing. Teachers should however have limited expectations as to how much revising and editing they can expect their young writers to do independently.

Although there is little substantial research into how the process of revision specifically affects the motivation of first grade students, there is an abundance of research that focuses on the affective domain of young writers within related fields such as process writing, revision strategies, writing attitudes, and the ramifications of computers on process writing. When the research that has been conducted in these subject areas is combined with a specific focus on emerging writers and their growing capabilities to revise and edit for meaning, a basis for meaningful research into how revising and editing affects the motivation of first grade writers is established.

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APPENDICES

January, 1999

Dear Parents:

Your child has been working very hard lately on writing exciting and original stories. As the children create their stories, they have been asked to follow the guidelines of the writing process. Writing stories within the context of the writing process means that the children must take their stories through each one of the following steps: 1) brainstorming ideas in relation to their chosen topics (usually in the form of a web); 2) creating rough drafts based on their webbed ideas; 3) revising and editing rough drafts for meaning and content; 4) proofreading for grammatical and spelling errors; and finally 5) publishing their stories in the form of a printed and bound book.

Tonight, your child has brought home his/her brainstorming web as well as the rough draft of the current story that he/she is working on. For homework, I would like you to help revise and edit your child's current writing project. Revisions may include the following: 1) Insertions of valuable or interesting information; 2) Adding on to the end of the story; and 3) Clarifying or restating information so that it is more easily understood.

Please be sure that the revisions that are made are based on your child's ideas. With this in mind, your child should make at least three revisions to his/her story. As you work on this project with your child, discuss why revising and editing are so important. When the work is done, reread the story and discuss with your child the specific improvements that were made. Talk about why you feel the story is now better than it was before.

Sincerely,
Mr. Baker

Name:

Story Title:

	Unmotivated	Somewhat Motivated	Motivated	Very Motivated
	1	2	3	4
Prior To Brainstorming	1	2	3	4
Upon Completion Of Brainstorming And Prior To Starting A Rough Draft	1	2	3	4
Upon Completion Of A Rough Draft And Prior To Revising and Editing	1	2	3	4
Upon Completion Of Revising and Editing	1	2	3	4
Upon Recieving Published Projects	1	2	3	4
Attitude Regarding Future Writing Projects	1	2	3	4

* Published materials will be typed and bound into books.